

DECISION



THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FILE: B-212032

DATE: July 6, 1983

MATTER OF: John A. Maxim, Jr. - Travel Expenses -  
Fees for Pet Care

DIGEST: Employee of Department of Housing and Urban Development seeks reimbursement for the cost of boarding his pet in a kennel while he was on temporary duty in Seattle, Washington. Kennel expenses may not be paid since neither 5 U.S.C. § 5706 (1976), nor Chapter 1, Part 9 of the Federal Travel Regulations, FPMR 101-7 (September 1981) authorize such an entitlement. Absent statutory or regulatory authorization, kennel costs may not be reimbursed.

The issue in this decision is whether an employee may be reimbursed for the cost of boarding his pet in a kennel while he was on temporary duty away from his permanent duty station. We hold that he may not be reimbursed since kennel expenses are not authorized by either 5 U.S.C. § 5706 (1976), or the implementing provisions of Chapter 1, Part 9 of the Federal Travel Regulations, FPMR 101-7 (September 1981) (FTR).

This decision is in response to a request from Ms. Lena M. Jones, an authorized certifying officer with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Washington, D.C., concerning the claim of Mr. John A. Maxim, Jr., for kennel charges for boarding his pet incurred while he was on temporary duty in Seattle, Washington.

Mr. Maxim, an Associate General Counsel with HUD in Washington, D.C., traveled to Seattle on official Government business from February 13, 1983, through February 19, 1983. Prior to leaving Washington, Mr. Maxim made arrangements for the K-Kennels International in Chantilly, Virginia, to care for his pet during the period of his absence. He boarded his pet at the kennel on his way to the airport on February 13, 1983, and picked the pet up shortly after he returned from Seattle on February 19, 1983. The total cost of boarding the pet for 6 days was \$105.

Mr. Maxim subsequently filed a claim with HUD for reimbursement of the kennel expenses. He has submitted to the

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agency a receipt evidencing payment of the amount stated above. Mr. Maxim apparently believes that the kennel expenses may be reimbursed as a necessary cost incident to his travel since there was "no one [else] to take care of [the] pet" while he was away. The agency denied the employee's claim on the basis of our decision in B-162466, September 27, 1967, which held that child care expenses incurred as the result of an employee's travel are not reimbursable under the provisions of the Standardized Government Travel Regulations, predecessor to the FTR.

Section 5706 of Title 5, United States Code, authorizes the payment of actual and necessary expenses incurred by Government employees traveling on official business away from their duty stations. Implementing the statute, Chapter 1, Part 9 of the FTR further authorizes the payment of certain miscellaneous expenses which may be incurred by employees in the performance of their duties. In each instance, however, travel expenses must be determined to be "essential to the transacting of official business" under paragraph 1-1.3b of the FTR.

We have previously held that fees for child care are generally not reimbursable expenses of travel or relocation under the provisions of the FTR. See William D. Fallin, B-210468, April 12, 1983, and cases cited therein. In B-162466, above, we denied the employee's claim for child care expenses which were incurred as a result of his temporary duty away from his permanent station. We stated that the fact that an employee would not have incurred the personal expense of a sitter for his child but for the employee's performance of official travel is not a sufficient basis for shifting the expense to the Government.

Similarly, the fact that Mr. Maxim incurred kennel expenses in this case as a result of his performance of temporary duty in Seattle is not a sufficient basis for shifting the boarding costs to the Government. Neither 5 U.S.C. § 5706, nor Chapter 1, Part 9 of the FTR authorize the payment of personal expenses such as kennel costs for an employee traveling on official business. Absent statutory or regulatory authorization, such costs may not be paid by the Government.

Therefore, we hold that Mr. Maxim's claim for reimbursement of kennel expenses may not be paid.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Milton J. Arosow".

Acting Comptroller General  
of the United States